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Remarks

The undersigned appreciates the Examiner's taking the time to advise of the reopening of the prosecution of this case.

The allowability of claims 10 and 15 in independent form is gratefully acknowledged. However, these claims should be allowable in dependent form for the reasons below.

Claims 6-9, 11-14, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable based on Karim. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The claimed invention relates to a process for coating a substrate to provide a non-tacky protective coating or film thereon. In contrast, Karim discloses adhesive compositions, i.e. compositions that are used to bind two substrates to each other.

The processes described by Karim relate to the uncured as well as the cured state(s) of the adhesive compositions.

Uncured adhesive compositions:

Karim discloses that its uncured adhesive compositions may be used directly or may be packaged and delivered in drums (c. 11, l. 10-20). It also discusses providing the adhesive compositions as uncured unsupported adhesive films (c. 11, l. 21-24). Such films are not tacky at room temperature (c. 2, l. 52-54). It is also possible to provide the adhesive compositions as tacky material on a film that is rolled up (c. 11, l. 25-30).

Curing of the adhesive compositions / Bonding of the two substrates

Karim describes two ways to bond two substrates together. The first method is described in column 12, lines 2-28: the adhesive composition on a first substrate is partially cured, whereupon the second substrate is bonded to the partially cured adhesive layer using heat and/or pressure. The second method is

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described in column 12, lines 29-32, and requires one of the substrates to be transparent to radiation: the second substrate is placed upon the adhesive composition on the first substrate, followed by irradiation through the substrate which is transparent to radiation.

Optionally before, and certainly during curing, the adhesive compositions of Karim are tacky, see column 2, lines 7, 23-24, and 32, and column 8, lines 47 and 50. After curing, the adhesive composition between the two substrates can be tack-free, see c. 12, l. 35; the adhesive is then fully cured and adheres very well to both substrates.

Karim does not mention or suggest that its adhesive composition would be suitable for use in a process for coating a substrate to provide a cured non-tacky protective coating or film thereon. It is submitted that the skilled artisan would not use an adhesive composition as a coating composition, because adhesives are used to bond two substrates, not to provide a (protective) coating layer on a substrate.

For the sake of brevity, any statements in the Office Action not specifically discussed herein are not agreed to thereby. Also, it is believed unnecessary to respond to the Interview Summary because it was initiated by the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,



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